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# Strong, Smart, and Bold Girls: The Girls Incorporated Approach to Education

## **Cover Page Footnote**

The authors wish to acknowledge all the participants in the Girls Inc. movement whose principles, commitment and experience are the basis for this article. Thanks also to the superb editors of the Fordham Urban Law Journal whose efforts have significantly improved the final version.

# **STRONG, SMART, AND BOLD GIRLS: THE GIRLS INCORPORATED® APPROACH TO EDUCATION**

*Heather Johnston Nicholson and Mary F. Maschino\**

## **I. GIRLS INCORPORATED—HISTORY, SCOPE, DEMOGRAPHICS**

Girls Incorporated® (“Girls Inc.”) is a national, nonprofit youth organization that “inspires all girls to be strong, smart and bold.”<sup>1</sup> The organization’s vision is to empower girls and help create an equitable society. Its roots go back to the Industrial Revolution when young women left their family farms to work in the textile mills of the northeastern United States. Many young women would go to Girls Clubs after work.<sup>2</sup> Eventually, Girl’s Clubs became places where women could safely learn practical skills. In 1945 fourteen charter Girls Clubs joined together to form a national organization.<sup>3</sup> Its original name, Girls Clubs of America, was changed to Girls Incorporated in 1990.<sup>4</sup>

In 2000, Girls Inc. programs reached more than 740,000 girls and young women ages six through eighteen.<sup>5</sup> Over one hundred affiliates, including YWCAs and community coalitions, provide programs to girls and young women in over 1,100 program sites.<sup>6</sup> A vast majority of these programs are conducted at schools during and after the school day.<sup>7</sup> Program areas include science, media criticism, leadership, and substance use prevention.<sup>8</sup>

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1. GIRLS INC., PROGRAM PLANNING GUIDE 1-2 (1993).

2. *Id.* at 1.

3. YWCA OF THE U.S.A. & GIRLS INC., PARTNERSHIP FOR TOMORROW’S WOMEN 6 (1992).

4. *Id.* at 7.

5. GIRLS INC., ANNUAL REPORT 2000 11 (2000), available at [www.girlsinc.org/ic/content/AnnualXReportX2000.pdf](http://www.girlsinc.org/ic/content/AnnualXReportX2000.pdf).

6. *Id.* at 6. For a detailed list of all affiliates and licensees, see Print Affiliates List at <http://www.girlsinc.org>.

7. CARLA FINE, STRONG, SMART & BOLD: EMPOWERING GIRLS FOR LIFE 195-98 (2001).

8. *Id.*

Girls Inc. is proud to have achieved impressive diversity amongst its participants. According to the 2000 annual survey of Girls Inc. affiliates, 70% of participants are girls of color, 48% are African American, 30% are White, and 15% are Latina.<sup>9</sup> About 75% come from families with incomes of \$25,000 a year or less, and about 40% live with two parents.<sup>10</sup> Nearly every Girls Inc. affiliate includes girls and young women with disabilities.<sup>11</sup> Many affiliates welcome girls who are lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or questioning their sexual preference.

Girls Inc. is governed by a national council. Each member organization has three votes. Each national board member, each past chair of the national board, and the current President/CEO has one vote.<sup>12</sup> At Girls Inc., member organizations are separate independent nonprofit organizations, such as Girls Incorporated of Metropolitan Dallas; Girls Incorporated of Shelbyville and Shelby County in Indiana; and Girls Incorporated of the Greater Capital Region in New York. The Council meets biennially to set overall policy. Girls Inc. also has a national board, which meets three or four times a year to decide on policy issues and ensure fiscal accountability. The president/CEO of Girls Inc. reports to the national board and leads a national staff of about sixty-five employees. The cooperation between Girls Inc. and its affiliates is very close. Affiliate representation is involved in both the national board, as well as through joint program development, research, training, and technical assistance within the Girls Inc. movement.

## II. EDUCATION IN THE OUT OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT— THE FREEDOM NOT TO GRADE

Girls Inc. programming developed in the tradition of the great national youth organizations. Its programs were offered primarily after school, on weekends, and during the summer. Considered recreational and enriching, the programs were intended to supplement the lives of young people who were doing well, and shore up the support systems of young people whose families and neighborhoods were struggling.<sup>13</sup> In this context, the youth organization is

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9. See *supra* note 5.

10. *Id.*

11. GIRLS INC., ANNUAL SURVEY OF AFFILIATES (2000).

12. GIRLS INC., BYLAWS1-2 (2000).

13. For a report on national youth organizations see CARNEGIE COUNCIL ON ADOLESCENT DEV., A MATTER OF TIME: RISK AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE NONSCHOOL HOURS 43-71 (1992).

free to follow the interests and preferences of young people and their parents. Girls Inc. is not required to issue credentials to progress the student to another grade level or to give tests over the mastery of required subjects. In general, the organization tries to avoid being "too schooly." Girls Inc. does this so that girls will want to join in our activities.

#### **A. Fun and Friends, Voice and Choice Come First**

Girls Inc. programming draws heavily from the experience of its affiliates. By the 1980s, their grassroots, homegrown approach to programming was a great source of pride for the organization. The responsibility of each organization was to see that the staff offered girls a mix of sports, field trips, photography, cooking, career exploration, adventure, and community service to keep them coming back.<sup>14</sup> Often girls were involved in the planning and some served on advisory committees or the board of directors. Many girls grew up at Girls Inc. in their after school hours, while others visited a few times a week or a month. The atmosphere was lighthearted but purposeful.

#### **B. The Foundation of Interactive Learning—Early Learning Theory, Social Group Work, and Adult Learning Theory**

From the beginning, Girls Inc. programming has been hands-on, interactive, and centered on the interests of the girls who participate. A spirit of wonder and discovery borrowed from early learning theory pervades the programs for younger girls.<sup>15</sup> Whether the activity is unstructured play, structured games, cooking sessions, or art projects, the focus is on enjoying the process. Girls Inc. cele-

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14. See GIRLS INC., *supra* note 1, at 55-61.

15. See generally MARIA MONTESSORI, *THE SECRET OF CHILDHOOD* 166-73 (M. Joseph Costelloe trans., 1966) (Maria Montessori devised a method of teaching that is followed today and is most often connected with the importance of play for young children); JOE M. SCHRIVER, *HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT: SHIFTING PARADIGMS IN ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE* (2d ed. 1997) (discussing Erik Erikson's eight-stage model of human development). Erikson wrote of the crisis of parental restrictions versus autonomy for children ages one to three, urging that autonomous play fosters healthy development. Today, the idea that stimulation at very early ages is critical to intelligence and thriving prompts some parents to begin formal education at much younger ages. *Id.*; DEBORAH STIPEK & KATHY SEAL, *MOTIVATING MINDS: RAISING CHILDREN TO LOVE LEARNING* 1-4 (2001) (emphasizing that children's love of learning can be stifled, rather than encouraged, by a premature resort to drill and practice, rather than allowing and encouraging self-generated inquiry).

brates fun and learning without assigning scores or dividing girls into categories of achievement.

Many of the people who work at Girls Inc. have a degree in social work or a background in social group work.<sup>16</sup> A group worker learns early on that it is her job to facilitate the development of the individuals and to foster bonding within the group.<sup>17</sup> Rather than instruct, or impart a body of knowledge, the group worker draws knowledge from the participants and helps them pull together to achieve a mutual goal.<sup>18</sup> The facilitator brings expertise in developing the participants' social skills and in helping clarify their perspectives and values.<sup>19</sup> After setting clear goals for the workshop, the facilitator provides small groups or pairs with resources to explore, roles to play, and decisions to make. Once again, the focus is on the goal and process of learning rather than the mastery of particular text; the adults are charged with making the enterprise fun, engaging, and worthwhile. This process-oriented, interactive learning characterizes the Girls Inc. approach, in both training adults to work with girls and educating girls in the Girls Inc. setting. Everyone is presumed and encouraged to be an active learner with much to contribute.

The process-oriented approach to education is further reinforced in Girls Inc. through the use of adult learning theory as the basis for workshops offered to paid program staff and volunteer trustees.<sup>20</sup> Adult learning theory is based on the premise that adults are busy people with well-formed habits and styles of learning.<sup>21</sup> Often one person creates the "script" and resources for a training work-

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16. See DAVID W. JOHNSON & FRANK P. JOHNSON, *JOINING TOGETHER: GROUP THEORY AND GROUP SKILLS* 6-7 (6th ed. 1999). The first edition of this text on social group work was published in 1975. The types of activities, the facilitator's role, the premise of respect for the participant, and the multi-media style of presentation are now firmly entrenched in social work education. *Id.*; see also GISELA KONOPKA, *THE ADOLESCENT GIRL IN CONFLICT* 10-13 (1966). Konopka and others helped link social group work to youth work. An early study helped youth organizations focus on the real issues of young people, especially adolescents. JUDY CORDER-BOLZ & D. SUSAN WISELY, *AN EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL YOUTHWORKER EDUCATION PROJECT: A SUMMARY REPORT* 1-3 (1980).

17. See J. William Pfeiffer & John E. Jones, *Design Considerations in Laboratory Education*, in *THE 1973 ANNUAL HANDBOOK FOR GROUP FACILITATORS* 177-94 (1973).

18. *Id.* at 180-81.

19. *Id.*

20. GIRLS INC., *CONTINUING EDUCATION GUIDE FOR TRUSTEES: A COMPANION TO THE ART OF TRUSTEESHIP* 257 (1999).

21. See *id.* A summary of the principles and practices of adult learning theory appears in the guide. Thus, the commitment to process-oriented education is evident in Girls Inc. for managers and trustees as well as program staff.

shop, which another person implements. The task for both the designer and the facilitator is to illuminate for participants the relevance of the material to the participant's own goals, and to elicit the knowledge, wisdom, and values the participants already bring to the topic. Each activity is designed to complete the cycle of learning that ends with reflection and application to the participant's own context. The design and implementation are fine-tuned on the basis of advance knowledge about each participant's background and experience and on the basis of individual and group dynamics during the workshop.

### **III. CORE PROGRAM TASK FORCE AND THE PROGRAM PLANNING GUIDE**

In the early 1980s Girls Inc., then Girls Clubs of America, acquired its first national director of program development.<sup>22</sup> Not long after, experienced executive directors in Girls Inc. affiliates began to lobby the program director for a coherent national program that all affiliates could implement, beginning with a survey of the similarities of programming in affiliates nationwide.<sup>23</sup> Around 1985, the Core Program Task Force was formed with representatives from national and local staffs and boards.<sup>24</sup> The task force met over an eighteen month period to develop policies and written documents based on those policies.<sup>25</sup> The group modeled their programming on a pyramid, with purpose and philosophy at the top, approach in the middle, and curricula and evaluation at the base.<sup>26</sup> The work of the core program task force, published first in 1987 as *Going Places* and now as the *Program Planning Guide*,<sup>27</sup> anchors the Girls Inc. program in development, implementation, and training.

#### **A. Feminist Philosophy—Social Change and the Similarities and Differences Among Girls**

The core program task force deliberately used the word "feminist" to describe ideal program staff members but otherwise avoided labels in favor of clear descriptions of goals and beliefs.<sup>28</sup>

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22. GIRLS INC., *supra* note 1.

23. GIRLS CLUBS OF AM., A PREVIEW OF GOING PLACES: GCA'S CORE PROGRAM FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN 3-4 (1987).

24. *Id.* at 2, 13.

25. *Id.* at 2-4, 8, 13.

26. GIRLS INC., *supra* note 1, at 1.

27. *Id.*

28. *Id.* at 24.

For one thing, the word “feminist” only resonated with some members of the task force: primarily middle-class White women struggling for rights in the labor force. From the beginning at Girls Inc., the sense of equity and fairness went beyond gender to include race, class, culture, religion, and language. The philosophy of Girls Inc. programming resonates with the feminism conceptualized by bell hooks:

[Feminism] is a commitment to eradicating the ideology of domination that permeates Western Culture on various levels—sex, race and class, to name a few—and a commitment to reorganizing U.S. society, so that the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desires.<sup>29</sup>

Certainly hooks’ emphasis on eradicating the ideology of domination in favor of the self-development of people characterizes the writing and practice within Girls Inc. The emphasis hooks places on economic transformation has been more problematic for Girls Inc. as will be later illustrated.<sup>30</sup>

The purpose of Girls Inc. programming stated in the 1993 edition of the *Program Planning Guide* is “to enable girls to be strong, smart and bold and achieve their full potential. Further, Girls Incorporated programming builds girls’ capacity for confident and responsible adulthood, economic independence and personal fulfillment.”<sup>31</sup> The *Guide* states that “Girls Incorporated believes that all girls are capable of achieving their full potential if the social, cultural and legal barriers to their success are recognized and addressed.”<sup>32</sup> In describing the social, cultural and legal barriers, the *Guide* first recognizes girls’ strengths and then names the barriers to their success:

- Girls are strong; but the settings in which they spend much of their lives fail to prepare them for independence.
- Girls are proud; but society teaches them to undervalue the contributions of women, past and present.

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29. BELL HOOKS, *AIN’T I A WOMAN* 194-95 (1981). Gloria Watkins writes under the pseudonym “bell hooks.” She claimed the name to honor a self-actualized grandmother who withstood racism, sexism, and classism. As of 1998, she teaches Women’s African American Studies at City College of New York. She is a prolific author and frequent lecturer. NAMULUNDAH FLORENCE, *BELL HOOKS’ ENGAGED PEDAGOGY* xv-xvi (1998).

30. See *infra* Section XII.

31. GIRLS INC., *supra* note 1, at 3.

32. *Id.*



- Girls are gifted; but discrimination based on racial, cultural, economic or other distinctions increases the obstacles to individual achievement.
- Girls are sisters; discrimination against girls on any basis adversely affects all girls.<sup>33</sup>

The statement of philosophy goes on to note that everyone who interacts with girls needs to support them and reduce the barriers to their progress.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the organization believes that girls deserve environments that take them seriously and programs that give them practice in new skills and in advocating for change.<sup>35</sup> The statement of philosophy ends with the Girls Inc. commitment to use its own resources to challenge and encourage girls to reach their full potential.

### **B. Approach—Environment, Staff, and Process**

Girls Inc. has a distinctive approach to programming. This includes creating an environment in which programming takes place, selecting and preparing program staff, and deciding how programming will take place—once again the focus is on the process. The environment is created with a gender lens.<sup>36</sup> A Girls Inc. environment is resource rich—books, posters, games, computer programs, and girls' work focus on the lives and accomplishments of women and girls of many cultures and many times.<sup>37</sup> One is more likely to see Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, and Dolores Huerta than George Washington or Denzel Washington.

A checklist for determining if the physical, social, and emotional environment is girl-friendly includes such adjectives as non-sexist, positive, supportive, accessible, inviting, challenging, inclusive, equitable, age-appropriate, safe, and girl-centered.<sup>38</sup>

Program staff members at Girls Inc. affiliates come from a variety of educational backgrounds, ranging from some high school through bachelors and advanced degrees in education, recreation, social work, sciences, humanities, and management. Program staff are treated as youth development professionals and provided with opportunities to increase their skills through training locally and nationally. This training is often developed by Girls Inc. and

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33. *Id.* at 3.

34. *Id.* at 4.

35. *Id.*

36. *Id.* at 12.

37. *Id.*

38. *Id.* at 12-13.

geared to specific programs. The *Program Planning Guide* describes the ideal program staff member as "a role model, a mentor, an advocate, an effective communicator, [who is] feminist, mission-oriented, knowledgeable about child development, skilled in group dynamics, inclusive, trained/willing to be trained, assertive, flexible, responsible, enthusiastic and fun, creative, curious, calm and reflective, and organized."<sup>39</sup> The list of ideal qualities is also used to assess the balance of the staff. Are they a match for the backgrounds and cultures of the girls who participate? Do they vary in styles and skills so that each girl finds staff members who are special for her? Despite notoriously rapid staff turnover in the fields of childcare and youth development, Girls Inc. affiliates invest in finding, training, and retaining program staff of the highest caliber.

The process of programming is the hands-on, interactive, girl-centered style previously described.<sup>40</sup> Keys to successful processes are organized under three concepts. *Exposure* entails expanding girls' horizons about their own abilities and aspirations and the changing roles of girls and women; offering opportunities to interact with women in many fields; presenting information on new and unusual subjects; and linking it all to career opportunities.<sup>41</sup> *Experience* encompasses developing and practicing new skills and supporting one another's efforts, exploring the physical environment and the community, setting and pursuing challenging academic and career goals, and taking appropriate risks.<sup>42</sup> *Reflection* is a vital component of the process and entails talking about experiences; crystallizing and analyzing messages; appreciating the lessons in both failure and success; linking skills and successes to academic and career pursuits; and taking pleasure in forms of reflection like journals, logs, and assessment activities.<sup>43</sup>

Programming at Girls Inc. is divided into informal time, single session activities, and structured programs.<sup>44</sup> During informal time girls choose from a variety of loosely structured options that could include playing a board game, shooting baskets, using the construction sets, or working on an article for the Girls Inc. newsletter. A single session activity may be a field trip, career fair, sports day, build your own pizza party, or any activity with a set time frame.

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39. *Id.* at 24-25.

40. *Id.* at 39-41.

41. *Id.* at 40.

42. *Id.*

43. *Id.* at 41.

44. GIRLS INC., *supra* note 1, at 41-44.

Girls Inc. is most widely known for its structured programs developed in partnership with affiliates. Structured programs, whether national or local, have distinct goals and objectives for change in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior and clear plans for the activities through which the change is to occur.

### C. Content—The Program Matrix

In seeking a way to categorize the content of programming, the core program task force settled upon a program matrix that adjusts for age and content.<sup>45</sup> The content categories are as follows: careers and life planning, health and sexuality, leadership and community action, sports and adventure, self-reliance and life skills, culture and heritage.<sup>46</sup> In each case the program category objectives reflect the developmental needs of children in a target age group, adjusted for the strengths and needs of girls resulting from gender stereotyping and discrimination.<sup>47</sup> The goals and objectives in the *Program Planning Guide* have been reviewed and tweaked but remain surprisingly applicable more than a decade later.

## IV. PROGRAM AS SOCIAL CHANGE—INTENTIONAL AND COMPENSATORY PROGRAMMING

Ask any experienced program staff member what is distinctive about a Girls Inc. program and she is likely to say that Girls Inc. programming is “intentional and compensatory.”<sup>48</sup> Intentional programming addresses girls’ strengths and needs with the intention of making a difference in their lives.<sup>49</sup> Girls Inc. is not just a place to play or hang out with friends. It is not just a place to interact with skilled and caring adults. Rather, environment, staff, process, content, and goals focus on the purpose of removing barriers to girls’ achieving their full potential.<sup>50</sup> No matter how much fun girls have at Girls Inc, the purpose is serious and oriented to expanding girls’ opportunities and engaging them in improving the world.<sup>51</sup>

Girls Inc. programming compensates girls for the discrimination they face in society.<sup>52</sup> Thus, it is not compensatory in the sense of remedial. Rather, it is compensatory in the sense used by the Su-

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45. *Id.* at 82-84.

46. *Id.* at 82-83.

47. *Id.* at 82-83.

48. *Id.* at 8-12.

49. GIRLS INC., *supra* note 1, at 8.

50. *Id.* at 3.

51. *Id.* at 1.

52. *Id.* at 10.

preme Court in *Califano v. Webster*,<sup>53</sup> a decision permitting single-sex institutions under the Equal Protection clause in some instances.<sup>54</sup> Girls Inc. programs deliberately provide girls with options and opportunities not available in other settings.<sup>55</sup> Most girls get the opportunity to look sweet, obey their mothers, play with dolls, jump rope, preen in front of boys, listen to the most popular radio stations, and shop. In Girls Inc. affiliates, girls have the opportunity to look sweaty; communicate honestly with their mothers; play with computers; do competitive double dutch or other sports; develop assertiveness skills that come in handy when boys are around; critique the lyrics in popular songs; and comparison shop. Some girls never have the opportunity to look sweet and obey their mothers. For these and all girls, compensatory environments build trust and reward caring, increasing the likelihood of forming healthy relationships. Through the compensatory lens, Girls Inc. helps one community, one family, and one girl at a time challenge and support girls in overcoming discrimination and achieving their full potential.<sup>56</sup>

#### V. ASSESS FOR SUCCESS—BOTH DAILY EVALUATION AND RIGOROUS EVALUATION

Practical, daily program evaluation is a priority of Girls Inc. and the organization continues to develop and test tools to assess whether the program is working for girls.<sup>57</sup> Like all good teachers, our program staff members reflect on what happens and change things for the better.<sup>58</sup> Busy program staff members want affirmation that their observations are credible and valuable; quick tools for checking on changes in knowledge and attitudes; and spectacular outcomes to persuade funders to donate. Increasingly, affiliates are under pressure from United Way and other funders to provide

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53. *Califano v. Webster*, 430 U.S. 313, 317 (1977).

54. *Id.*; Denise C. Morgan, *Finding a Constitutionally Permissible Path to Sex Equality: the Young Women's Leadership School of East Harlem*, 14 N.Y.L. SCH. J. HUM. RTS. 95, 105 (1997). Morgan notes that Justice Ginsberg later approved the compensatory sex-based classification established in *Califano v. Webster*. *Id.*; For an extensive review of the research and jurisprudence on single-sex education see Rosemary C. Salome, *Single-Sex Schooling: Law, Policy and Research*, in BROOKINGS PAPERS ON EDUCATION POLICY 231-97 (Diane Ravitch ed., 1999).

55. GIRLS INC., *supra* note 1, at 10.

56. *Id.* at 10.

57. GIRLS INC., ASSESS FOR SUCCESS: NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION GUIDE vii (1991).

58. *Id.* at 78.

evidence that programs produce results.<sup>59</sup> The challenge is to provide tools that are closely linked to program values and that consistently show positive results from relatively short-term interventions.<sup>60</sup>

Girls Inc. simultaneously invests in tools for daily measurement of program effectiveness and rigorous evaluation of major national programs.<sup>61</sup> Ideally, one goes through the fuss and bother of scientific impact evaluation only when a program has been around long enough to show apparent effectiveness and ready recruitment of participants.<sup>62</sup> Often the vicissitudes of funding allow for the processes of program development and outcome evaluation to go on at the same time.<sup>63</sup> In either case, Girls Inc. affiliates have been eager to participate as test sites for sophisticated studies.

## VI. PROGRAM DIRECTORS AS CHANGE AGENTS

Several members of the core program task force designed and implemented core program training to incorporate the philosophy, approach, and content into real programs offered by affiliates.<sup>64</sup> Core program training was greeted so enthusiastically that a subsequent grant resulted in an annual one-week institute for program directors.<sup>65</sup> A case study evaluation found that affiliates that sent staff to the Program Directors Institute and other training institutions showed signs of institutionalizing the Girls Inc. program philosophy and practice.<sup>66</sup> More specifically, the independent evaluators found that "program directors can be change agents within their organizations if given the necessary preparation, tools, and support."<sup>67</sup>

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59. *Id.* at 91.

60. *Id.* at 64.

61. *Id.* at 90.

62. Jacquelynne S. Eccles & Janice Templeton, *Community-Based Programs for Youth: Lessons Learned from General Developmental Research and From Experimental and Quasi-experimental Evaluations* (2001) (Unpublished manuscript available at [www.harvard.edu/urbanpoverty](http://www.harvard.edu/urbanpoverty)).

63. *Id.* at 7.

64. GIRLS INC., *BECOMING STRONG, SMART & BOLD: GIRLS INCORPORATED PROGRAM DIRECTORS AS CHANGE AGENTS*, EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 7 (1999).

65. *Id.* at 2.

66. *Id.* at 8.

67. *Id.* at 7.

## VII. WHY GIRLS ONLY? ADVOCACY AT THE HEART OF INFORMAL EDUCATION

At one time the lives of girls were thought to be quite different from the lives of boys, warranting, or even requiring, separate organizations for after school enrichment.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, many of the largest youth organizations had one organization for each gender: Girls Clubs of America (now Girls Incorporated) and Boys Clubs of America (now Boys and Girls Clubs of America); Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. and Boy Scouts of America; YWCA and YMCA. It has always been puzzling when people ask why Girls Inc. has not joined with its ostensibly “matching” organization and offered co-ed programming. At Girls Inc. resources are directed toward positive change in the lives of girls. The organization cheers any after school program or youth organization that brings a gender lens and sensitive treatment to boys and young men. However, gender sensitivity does not seem to dominate organizations that were started primarily for boys.<sup>69</sup>

## VIII. LIBERATION THEORY—UNDERSTANDING RACE, CLASS, AND OTHER DIFFERENCES

The diversity of Girls Inc. and its commitment to a philosophy of equity makes it natural to engage in social change. The organization keeps returning to liberation theory to figure out how to create programs for girls in the real world.<sup>70</sup> Girls Inc. wants to put every girl online yet knows that while girls in middle class families are likely to have computers at home and at school, girls in lower income families are likely to have computers at school but not at home.<sup>71</sup> Economic resources and power are unevenly distributed in ways that affect girls every day.

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68. MOLLY MEAD, *GENDER MATTERS: FUNDING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS* 13 (2001).

69. *Id.*

70. Liberation theory holds that violence will be reduced and justice increased if people unlearn patterns of discrimination and oppression defined by gender, race, class, religion, age, sexual orientation and other characteristics. The imbalances of power are systematic, institutionalized and passed from one generation to the next. See ALLAN CREIGHTON & PAUL KIVEL, *HELPING TEENS STOP VIOLENCE: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR COUNSELORS, EDUCATORS, AND PARENTS* x, 13-14 (1990).

71. ERIC C. NEWBURGER, U.S. DEP'T OF COMMERCE, PUB. NO. P23-207, *HOME COMPUTERS AND INTERNET USE IN THE UNITED STATES: AUGUST 2000: CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS* 5 (2001); DONALD F. ROBERTS, *KIDS & MEDIA @ THE NEW MILLENNIUM: A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S USE OF THE MEDIA* (1999).

We need programs that help girls stay out of danger and avoid resorting to violence. Off the shelf conflict resolution and negotiation programs implicitly assume equals come to the bargaining table to resolve their differences. We find from bullying, sexual harassment, cliques, racial profiling, and hate crimes that violence in our society is based on the learned power of men over women, rich over poor, Whites over African Americans.<sup>72</sup> The Girls Inc. response to violence in girls' lives must re-examine the premises at its core and understand the pernicious effects of some groups having power over other groups.

### **IX. IS THERE STILL A PROBLEM?—THE GIRLS' BILL OF RIGHTS**

"Gender equality—didn't we discover that in the '70s, make the changes in the '80s and consolidate the new ways in the '90s?" We are often asked, "Is it really an issue for today's girls?" At Girls Inc. we want to be sure not to artificially keep the notion of gender differences alive, so we monitor the media, comb the research, and listen to girls.<sup>73</sup> In 1999, Girls Inc. worked with Harris Interactive Inc. on a nationally representative Girls' Rights survey—a study of students of both genders on their experiences with gender stereotypes.<sup>74</sup> In the study, more than half of high school girls were very dissatisfied with the role gender stereotypes play in their lives:

- 56% of all girls and 78% of high school girls said that boys think they have a right to discuss girls' bodies in public;
- 65% of all girls said girls are expected to spend a lot of their time on housework and taking care of younger children;
- 57% of high school girls said that people think girls are only interested in love and romance;
- 56% of girls say girls are expected to speak softly and not cause trouble;
- 75% of all girls and 81% of high school girls said girls are under a lot of pressure to dress the right way;

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72. CREIGHTON & KIVEL, *supra* note 70, at 21-61; DAN OLWEUS & SUE LIMBER, BLUEPRINTS FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION: BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM BOOK NINE (Delbert S. Elliott ed., 1999). See both these sources on imbalances of power as central to bullying and violence.

73. HARRIS INTERACTIVE, TAKING THE LEAD: GIRLS' RIGHTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A NATIONWIDE SURVEY OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN CONDUCTED FOR GIRLS, INCORPORATED 2 (2000).

74. *See id.*

- 63% of girls, and 70% of high school girls said girls are under a lot of pressure to please everyone.<sup>75</sup>

Gender stereotypes still are strong and continue to interfere with girls and young women on the move. Girls Inc. and its affiliates are engaging girls across the nation in speaking out on their rights and bringing attention to needed changes in policies and practices. According to the Girls Inc. Girls' Bill of Rights, "[G]irls have the right

to be themselves and to resist gender stereotypes  
to express themselves with originality and enthusiasm  
to take risks, to strive freely, and to take pride in success  
to accept and appreciate their bodies  
to have confidence in themselves and to be safe in the world  
to prepare for interesting work and economic independence."<sup>76</sup>

The public advocacy work of Girls Inc. amplifies the work that affiliates do every day with the girls they serve in some 130 cities. Increasingly girls do the talking in legislative offices, town councils, and the halls of Congress.

#### **X. OPERATION SCIENCE MATHEMATICS AND RELEVANT TECHNOLOGY ("SMART") AND PREVENTING ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY—INVENTING DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE EDUCATION BASED ON RESEARCH**

The first two major programs of Girls Inc. were Operation SMART®, dealing with math, science, and technology and Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy<sup>SM</sup>, preparing girls for sound decision-making about sexuality, relationships, and the future.<sup>77</sup> By now more than 400,000 young people have participated in Opera-

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75. *Id.* at 6-11.

76. Girls Inc. has had a Girls' Bill of Rights since 1945. The current version appears in HARRIS INTERACTIVE, *supra* note 73, at 1. See also GIRLS CLUBS OF AM., A PLANNING GUIDE FOR GOING PLACES: GCA'S CORE PROGRAM FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN 60 (1987); GIRLS INC., *supra* note 1, at 87.

77. Heather Johnston Nicholson & Leticia T. Postrado, *A Comprehensive Age-Phased Approach: Girls Incorporated*, in PREVENTING ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY: MODEL PROGRAMS AND EVALUATIONS 111 (Brent C. Miller et. al. eds. 1992). See generally Heather Johnston Nicholson & Ellen Wahl Sullivan, *Operation SMART: From Research to Program—and Back* 4 GASAT Proc. 331 (1987).



tion SMART<sup>78</sup> and more than 200,000 have participated in Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy.<sup>79</sup>

The impetus for Operation SMART was the observation by affiliates that the girls they served were not ending up in lucrative positions, whether or not they went on to higher education, even though most of the girls held jobs when they left Girls Inc. With funding from the U.S. Department of Education, the National Science Foundation and several corporate foundations, Girls Inc. began developing a program to interest girls in the natural world and retain that interest throughout their school years.<sup>80</sup> At the same time, Girls Inc. was exploring "best practices" in science learning through action research.<sup>81</sup> Operation SMART was a way of thinking about math and science, not primarily a set of activities. The SMART philosophy was to infuse every aspect of Girls Inc. programming environments with enticing questions and opportunities to learn, to make every staff member into Operation SMART program staff.<sup>82</sup>

After many years of connecting girls to math, science, and technology in an out-of-school context we learned that fun is central but not enough. The informal science program must make the connections to school from the beginning. The quaint Western notion that some students can do science while others cannot still permeates our culture and disproportionately disadvantages girls, students of color of both sexes, low income students, and students with disabilities.<sup>83</sup> Despite the closing gaps in course taking and

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78. THE NAT'L COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN, *BALANCING THE EQUATION: WHERE ARE WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY?* 34 (2001).

79. GIRLS INC., *ANNUAL REPORT 7* (2000), available at <http://www.girlsinc.org/ic/content/AnnualXReportX2000.pdf>.

80. Nicholson & Sullivan, *supra* note 77, at 331.

81. GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA, INC. (GIRLS INCORPORATED), *PROCEEDINGS FROM THE OPERATION SMART RESEARCH CONFERENCE 15-20 (1987)*; Faedra Lazar Weiss et al., *Giving Girls a Break: Sustaining Girls' Participation in Science, Math and Technology*, in *THOUGHTS AND DEEDS: EQUITY IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE EDUCATION* 73-81 (Nancy Kreinberg & Ellen Wahl eds., 1997).

82. Nicholson & Sullivan, *supra* note 77, at 336.

83. Barbara B. Lazurus, *Concluding Recommendations: A Call for Future Research*, in MARY THOM, *BALANCING THE EQUATION: WHERE ARE WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY?* 113 (2001). Lazurus, associate provost for academic affairs at Carnegie Mellon University, recounts a recent trip to Japan where she interviewed women scientists and engineers. She says that she "started out with an assumption about the role of math in keeping women out of engineering careers, because we know that girls are discouraged in the U.S. where too often math is considered not only gendered male but innate in a funny way. We assume everybody can learn to read but not everybody can learn to do Algebra II, and

school grades, the gap in intended college majors remains wide.<sup>84</sup> Going beyond getting girls to *like* math and science, Operation SMART focuses on nifty careers and the women who hold them, the course work it takes to pursue a scientific or technical career beyond high school, and preparation for taking standardized tests.<sup>85</sup> Most importantly, Operation SMART focuses on persuading girls that they can be scientific insiders—that real women a lot like them are in these fields and have exciting careers and fulfilling lives.<sup>86</sup> In the long run, if girls and women are in the sciences we will need to resort less to persuasion—the fields themselves will be more girl-friendly in both environment and content.<sup>87</sup>

Beginning in the early 1980s, Girls Inc. also developed, implemented, and evaluated its four-component Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy program.<sup>88</sup> At the time, the funding for youth programs was concentrated in solving the societal problems that young people faced.<sup>89</sup> It was easier to get funding for pregnancy prevention

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we give up on people very easily.” In Japan, “nobody could fathom the notion that if learning higher math didn’t come easily, you weren’t supposed to continue. You were supposed to work harder. It became clear that Japanese women had very different career opportunities than men, but it had nothing to do with some concept of a math gene.” SAMUEL ROUNDFIELD LUCAS, *TRACKING INEQUALITY: STRATIFICATION AND MOBILITY IN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOLS* 144 (1999). Lucas finds a decade after Oakes’s study that much of the overt tracking has been dismantled but “the ostensibly egalitarian change seems a cruel and callous ruse . . . . There is good reason to question whether any structural change in schools alone can bring about equal opportunity for disadvantaged students.” JEANNIE OAKES, *MULTIPLYING INEQUALITIES: THE EFFECTS OF RACE, SOCIAL CLASS, AND TRACKING ON OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE* vi-viii (1990). Oakes documented that “assessments of academic ability, placement in different tracks or ability-grouped classes, and the reduced educational opportunities that characterize low-track classes often parallel race and social class differences.” SAMUEL ROUNDFIELD LUCAS, *TRACKING INEQUALITY: STRATIFICATION AND MOBILITY IN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOLS* 144 (1999). Lucas finds a decade after Oakes’s study that much of the overt tracking has been dismantled but “the ostensibly egalitarian change seems a cruel and callous ruse . . . . There is good reason to question whether any structural change in schools alone can bring about equal opportunity for disadvantaged students.”

84. CONG. COMM’N ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN SCI., ENG’R AND TECH. DEV., *LAND OF PLENTY: DIVERSITY AS AMERICA’S COMPETITIVE EDGE IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY* 4 (2000).

85. Nicholson & Sullivan, *supra* note 77, at 333-34.

86. MARY THOM, *BALANCING THE EQUATION: WHERE ARE WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY?* 34 (2001). *See generally* Nicholson & Sullivan, *supra* note 77 (explaining that an emphasis on real-life models and mentors is an integral part of the Operation SMART program).

87. *See generally* THOM, *supra* note 86 (discussing strategies for increasing the role of girls and women in the sciences).

88. Nicholson & Postrado, *supra* note 77, at 111.

89. *Id.* at 110 (stating that in the early 1980s, teenage pregnancy and parenthood were pervasive problems).

than sexuality education. The Girls Inc. approach has been to affirm the healthy and normal aspects of sexuality as an exciting part of human personality and to provide girls with skills to cope with the issues they face at each stage of their development.<sup>90</sup> Girls Inc. planned a parent-daughter workshop for girls ages twelve to fourteen but through trial and error discovered that age range was too high.<sup>91</sup> By that age girls were afraid their parents would think they were doing anything they had questions about; and some parents were intimidated by how much their daughters knew, especially in street language, about sex. So the family communication workshop, Growing Together<sup>SM</sup>, was and still is successfully offered to girls age 9 to 11 paired with parents, caregivers or other sympathetic adults.<sup>92</sup> Together parents and daughters learn about puberty and talk about the family's values about relationships with boys. They learn conversation starters and get beyond the usual embarrassment surrounding the discussion of sexuality. Especially popular with Latina mothers and daughters, the program has been translated into Spanish as *Crecer juntas*.<sup>93</sup>

Will Power/Won't Power (also *Querer/Poder decir no*), the component for girl ages twelve to fourteen, focuses on reasons to wait until later for sexually intimate relationships, even if one has already had sex.<sup>94</sup> The premise is that girls want and need straight information about sex, their bodies, and relationships. They develop skills for recognizing and resisting pressure to be sexually active, including how to assert their right to decline sexual involvement. Additionally, they join in sisterhood to support one another's decisions to wait until later to have sexual intercourse. In the early study of the program, we found that nearly one-fourth of girls age twelve to fourteen in our sample had sex before participating in the study.<sup>95</sup> Other research on programs for middle and high school students indicates that effective programs include information about contraception and safer sex along with the absti-

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90. See *id.* at 111.

91. Nicholson & Postrado, *supra* note 77, at 132.

92. *Id.* at 112-13.

93. GIRLS INC., CRECER JUNTAS<sup>SM</sup> (2001).

94. GIRLS INC., BECOMING STRONG, SMART & BOLD: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 14 (1996) ("Girls learn assertiveness skills and analyze peer and social pressure in this interactive program designed to encourage young teens to delay engaging in sexual intercourse.").

95. GIRLS INC., TRUTH, TRUST AND TECHNOLOGY: NEW RESEARCH ON PREVENTING ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY 2 (1991).

nence option.<sup>96</sup> As a result, the second edition of *Will Power/Won't Power* includes sessions on contraception and avoiding HIV and sexually transmitted infections ("STIs").

Taking Care of Business® is the component for young women ages fifteen to eighteen.<sup>97</sup> In the context of planning for education and careers, the program focuses on sexual responsibility—the right, responsibility, resources and skills to either abstain from sexual involvement or to ensure that the relationship is nonexploitative and protects both partners from unintended pregnancy and STIs.<sup>98</sup> The final component of Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy is the Health Bridge,<sup>SM99</sup> connecting Girls Inc. programming with comprehensive health services in the community. Health Bridge is intended to enhance girls' awareness and responsibility for their health and to reduce barriers to effective contraception and disease prevention for girls who are, or are about to be, sexually active.<sup>100</sup> Again, early evaluations showed all four components to be promising,<sup>101</sup> a rigorous study of Will Power/Won't Power in and out of the context of other Girls Inc. programs is underway.

## XI. MEDIA LITERACY AND PROJECT BOLD—CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS TO SHIELD AGAINST AND PENETRATE POPULAR CULTURE

Research shows that girls who often read health and fitness magazines and girls who watch a lot of television are more likely to diet, regardless of their weight.<sup>102</sup> Girls are entitled to maintain a critical distance from the relentless messages and vapid stereotypes of popular culture. Girls Inc. teaches girls of each age group to understand the media they see and hear, turning them into critical

96. DOUGLAS KIRBY, EMERGING ANSWERS: RESEARCH FINDINGS ON PROGRAMS TO REDUCE TEEN PREGNANCY 92-93 (2001).

97. Nicholson & Postrado, *supra* note 77, at 133.

98. *Id.* at 133.

99. *Id.* at 117. Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy, Taking Care of Business, Health Bridge and all other program names marked SM are service marks of Girls Incorporated.

100. *Id.*

101. Nicholson & Postrado, *supra* note 77, at 137 (stating that the program reduced pregnancy among the program's participants).

102. GIRLS INC., RE-CASTING TV: GIRLS' VIEWS 4 (1996) ("Nearly twice as many girls as boys say they have 'dieted or exercised to look like a character [they've] seen on TV' [15% v. 8%]."); Steven R. Thomsen, Michelle M. Weber & Lora Beth Brown, *The Relationship Between Health and Fitness Magazine Reading and Eating-Disordered Weight-Loss Methods Among High School Girls*, AM. J. HEALTH EDUC. 133, 136 (2001) (reporting a study that revealed frequent readers of health and fitness magazines are more likely to exhibit eating disorder behaviors).

thinkers and careful consumers of the messages directed at them.<sup>103</sup> For the youngest girls, one task is helping them distinguish between reality and fiction, programming and advertising. In each age group we pay attention to advertising, health, careers in the media, news, and representations of girls and young women. In most media the stereotypes are so blatant and preposterous that girls of all ages quickly become skilled in recognizing and categorizing the portrayals.<sup>104</sup> In the news—front page, sports, business—a counting activity often point out the paucity or absence of women in stories and as writers and editors.<sup>105</sup> Girls decide what the media will look like when they are in positions of influence, and they communicate with the current decision makers in entertainment, advertising, and policy making.

Since about 1995 Girls Inc. has been developing Project BOLD,<sup>SM</sup> a comprehensive response to violence in girls' lives.<sup>106</sup> The appalling number of deaths of African American young people in our inner cities argues for a society-wide effort to increase hope and expectations for a good life for these youth, while decreasing their access to lethal weapons.<sup>107</sup> The deaths in Littleton, Colorado<sup>108</sup> tell us that the bullying and isolation of young people puts us all in jeopardy. The cycle of violence at home must be interrupted and the mostly male perpetrators apprehended and turned around, lest another generation of abusive men and abused women and children perpetuate the cycle through their own abu-

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103. *Id.* at 2.

104. *See id.* at 2 (noting that girls want more positive and realistic portrayals of females on television).

105. Judith Jenkins George, *Lack of News Coverage for Women's Athletics: A Questionable Practice of Newspaper Priorities*, at Women's Sports Foundation Media Spotlight at <http://63.240.26.230/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/media/article.html?record=807>.

106. GIRLS INC., ACTION FOR SAFETY: A SELF-DEFENSE AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR GIRLS 9-11 i. (1998). Project Bold is a comprehensive initiative of Girls Inc. addressing the impact of violence on the lives of girls and young women ages 6 to 18. Programs are aimed at increasing girls' skills for physical autonomy and personal safety, helping them identify and resist sexual harassment, and providing them opportunities to act collectively to reduce the level of violence in their communities and in their lives.

107. *See* DEBORAH PROTHROW-STITH & MICHAEL WEISSMAN, DEADLY CONSEQUENCES 56-59 (1993) (discussing how making plans for the future correlates with increased academic performance and decreased violent behavior among poor inner city Black adolescents).

108. Michael Janofsky, *Bill on Student Bullying is Considered in Colorado*, N.Y. TIMES, Mar. 19, 2001, § A, available at 2001 WL 17362465 (discussing different viewpoints of a bill in Colorado designed to prevent further student shootings like the event at Columbine High School on April 20, 1999, where a group of students opened fire in the middle of the school day).

sive and submissive behavior. Once again, sound programs for girls depend upon understandings sensitive to both gender and race.

A partnership between Girls Incorporated and Girls Incorporated of Omaha brings girls ages six to eight a sense of their right to be safe and get adult help, even if the first adult does not believe them.<sup>109</sup> A partnership between the Center for Anti-Violence Education in Brooklyn and Girls Inc. resulted in the Girls Inc. national program Action for Safety<sup>SM</sup>, in which girls ages nine to eleven learn skills for recognizing and avoiding danger.<sup>110</sup> The program's "six stars" of self-defense include using a loud or soft voice, getting away, and trusting one's feelings.<sup>111</sup> Another "star" includes karate blocks, hits and kicks, learned as a source of power, energy and reduced feelings of vulnerability and with a sense of responsibility for distinguishing between annoying situations where physical measures are not appropriate and dangerous situations where physical measures can be lifesaving. Still under development is Taking Action, a program for girls ages twelve to fourteen, which will assist girls in acting on issues of violence in their lives.<sup>112</sup>

## **XII. CHALLENGES OF ECONOMIC LITERACY—MEAN STREET MEETS WALL STREET**

Back in the Girls Club days, Girls Inc. affiliates paid significant attention to preparing girls for paid work and interesting careers.<sup>113</sup> Several factors opened up girls' career possibilities and the way Girls Inc. addressed careers. In the early 1980s, major national surveys of girls showed that most of them planned to work for pay for significant portions of their lives.<sup>114</sup> The U.S. Department of

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109. GIRLS INC., BECOMING STRONG, SMART AND BOLD: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 15 (1996).

110. GIRLS INC., *supra* note 106, at 5.

111. *Id.* at 5-33, 59-60.

112. GIRLS INC., PROJECT BOLD: HELPING GIRLS LIVE SAFER LIVES (2000).

113. GIRLS INC., *supra* note 1, at 1.

114. See JERALD G. BACHMAN ET AL., MONITORING THE FUTURE: QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES FROM THE NATION'S HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS 1992, at 165 (1993); JERALD G. BACHMAN ET AL., MONITORING THE FUTURE: QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES FROM THE NATION'S HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS 1990, at 163 (1993); JERALD G. BACHMAN ET AL., MONITORING THE FUTURE: QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES FROM THE NATION'S HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS 1980, at 151 (1981); LLOYD D. JOHNSTON ET AL., MONITORING THE FUTURE: QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES FROM THE NATION'S HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS 1985 152 (1986). For example, the *Monitoring the Future* national survey of high school seniors by 1980 showed that 7.4% of girls expected to be full time housewives/homemakers at age 30. The same question yielded percentages of 4.0% in 1985, 2.4% in 1990 and 1.8% in 1992.

Labor noted in 1985 that the average woman's participation in the paid labor force had grown from 14.5 years in 1950 to 26 years in 1977 and predicted that the average would further increase when girls in 1985 reached working age.<sup>115</sup> It took the women's movement to get beyond the assumption that jobs for women meant the traditionally female and systematically underpaid occupations of cleaning, secretarial work, childcare, teaching, and nursing.

A Girls Inc. affiliate developed a popular guide to careers and life planning, which focused on careers based on girls' skills and interests, resulting in pleasant lifestyles and flexibility in accommodating family and other demands.<sup>116</sup> Operation SMART, meanwhile, was encouraging girls to consider scientific and technical careers. Women who were hitting the glass ceiling left existing businesses in great numbers to establish their own firms.<sup>117</sup> Girls learned that women, too, could be entrepreneurs.

Into this context came the idea that just earning a living is not enough in today's society. Everything from a hair salon to a dot.com business requires capital—money earned, saved, invested and borrowed. Yet many women reported they had learned little about money as they were growing up,<sup>118</sup> and girls more so than boys, felt little confidence in their knowledge of money and investing.<sup>119</sup> Corporations in the finance industry were eager to work with Girls Inc. on bringing girls up to speed on understanding, managing and investing money, and program development began for Girls Inc. Economic Literacy<sup>SM</sup>, with components for girls ages six to eighteen.<sup>120</sup>

Girls Inc. is working on including in the economic literacy program the kind of critical analysis of the current rules of economic power that characterize its programs on media literacy and violence prevention. Girls are entitled to know that much of the work of women and children in the society—getting an education, preparing and serving meals, nurturing and challenging children, tak-

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115. Elizabeth Waldman, *Today's Girls In Tomorrow's Labor Force: Projecting their Participation and Occupations* 16 YOUTH & SOC'Y 375, 379 (1985).

116. MINDY BINGHAM ET AL., CHOICES: A TEEN WOMAN'S JOURNAL FOR SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL PLANNING 195-200 (1993).

117. See *Bypassing the Glass Ceiling: Women Turn to Entrepreneurship When the Corporate Ladder Comes Up Short*, SAN DIEGO UNION TRIB., June 18, 2001, at D1.

118. WIRTHLIN WORLDWIDE, WOMEN AND INVESTING: NATIONAL QUORUM 1 (1997) (reporting that seventy-five percent of women surveyed wished they had learned more about investing during their childhood).

119. LOUIS HARRIS AND ASSOCS., KIDS AND MONEY 4 (1998).

120. *She's On the Money*, in GIRLS INK 1,4 (1998); *From the National Executive Director*, in GIRLS INK 2 (1998).

ing care of elderly family members—is unaccounted for in our economic system and underpaid when done for pay. Similarly, many girls who participate in Girls Inc. are all too aware of the underground economy of drug selling, closely tied to institutional racism, where life expectancy is short and the risk of incarceration is high.<sup>121</sup>

Girls around the world may think that the United States is arrogant and greedy as it consumes enormous amounts of energy and raw materials and thrives on the low wages in the global South; girls and young women in the U.S. meanwhile may wonder why the United States is so unpopular in many nations. The economic critique of bell hooks and other feminists has yet to be mixed with the compensatory introduction to investment in the Girls Inc. economic literacy program. In part, the challenge is to introduce economic criticism in concrete terms that younger girls can understand. In part staff and board members are ambivalent about how Girls Inc. can benefit from corporate giving in good conscience and yet be critical of the entire economic system.

### **XIII. DISCOVERY—REINVENTING LEADERSHIP AS “POWER WITH AND POWER WITHIN”**

In a satisfying series of events, Girls Inc. was able to work with the Minneapolis YWCA and Girls Inc. of Metro Denver to develop Discovery: A Leadership Program for Girls and Women.<sup>SM122</sup> From the beginning the program was developed with a team approach—a team that included girls ages 9 to 11 and women as volunteers, as well as national and affiliate staff.<sup>123</sup> Too often leadership programs begin to sort young people into leaders and followers right away. In Discovery, we talk about the often unsung natural leadership of women and about leadership as a set of skills and sense of involvement in the community. The program requires a group of twelve or so girls and a few women who explore the concept of leadership, identify a common community and plan and implement a project for bringing positive change to the community.<sup>124</sup> Together the girls and women explore the concept of lead-

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121. See *Black-White Inequities*, THE BOSTON GLOBE, Jan. 14, 1989, at 22 (noting life expectancy for drug dealers to be very low and decreasing).

122. See GIRLS INC., EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 15 (1996); see also *Leadership: New Program Helps Girls and Women Unlock Their Strengths and Take Action*, in GIRLS INC. (1994) [hereinafter *Leadership*].

123. *Leadership*, *supra* note 122, at 1.

124. *Id.*



ership as they create the sound of the Discovery band from spoons, cans full of coins, empty plastic bottles and other non-instruments. Together they assess community needs on a neighborhood walk, parse the newspaper headlines for issues, and decide on a project for community change.<sup>125</sup> Girls thrive on the process and call one another leaders; the goal is not successful community change, but the girls' experience of individual and collective decision-making.

The program encourages an emergent rather than ascendant view of leadership. Leadership takes skill, practice, and reflection. In their description of the Girls' Leadership Center in Portland Oregon, Denise DeZolt and Mary Henning-Stout describe a similar approach to leadership as "power with and power within" instead of "power over" others.<sup>126</sup> That is, girls find the leaders within themselves and the power of their collective wisdom. Girls Inc. believes this more benevolent view of leadership prepares girls for community action today and public office tomorrow. Empowered girls must be tough and savvy but sensitive and affirming to lead us toward a more equitable world.

#### XIV. STAYING ON THE CUTTING EDGE

Girls Inc. has decided to focus on eight core programs<sup>127</sup> for the near term. This means an ambitious campaign to keep programs fresh and relevant, while assuring all components necessary to convey the programs to new providers beyond the current Girls Inc. network of affiliates and licensees.

Girls Inc. is working to make sure that program guides are published; training scripts are appropriate for broader audiences; evaluation materials accompany every component; research materials support the importance of the program; program objectives are connected to the standards and benchmarks of formal education; and accompanying materials for girls are readily available.

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125. *Id.* at 1, 4.

126. Denise M. DeZolt & Mary Henning-Stout, *Adolescent Girls' Experiences in School and Community Settings*, in *BEYOND APPEARANCE: A NEW LOOK AT ADOLESCENT GIRLS* 253, 269 (Norine G. Johnson et al. eds., 1999).

127. The eight programs are Girls Inc. Operation SMART; Girls Inc. Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy; Girls Inc. Friendly PEERsuasion<sup>SM</sup> substance use prevention; Girls Inc. Project BOLD; Girls Inc. Girls Take the Lead<sup>SM</sup> of which Discovery is a part; Girls Inc. She's On the Money; Girls Inc. Sporting Chance and Girls Inc. Girls Get the Message<sup>SM</sup>.

In addition, the national organization works with affiliates to bring creative local programs to the entire network.<sup>128</sup> A recently completed example is My Girlfriend Zelda, a Girls Inc. of Chattanooga program in which girls ages six to eight don scrubs and masks to perform surgery on the cloth doll, Zelda, to open her up and learn about each of the major systems of the body.<sup>129</sup> A smash hit with staff and girls alike, My Girlfriend Zelda is being adopted by affiliates across the country as part of their programming in health and sexuality.

#### XV. TITLE IX AND THE SCHOOL SETTING—GIRLS ONLY?

Title IX of the Education Act Amendments of 1972 breathed life into gender equity in schools.<sup>130</sup> For example, between 1972 and 1999 the number of girls in school-based sports increased nearly tenfold, from fewer than 250,000 to more than two million, while the number of boys remained nearly constant.<sup>131</sup> Many observers suggest that any gender-based categorization or programming jeopardizes the achievements of Title IX and becomes a slippery slope toward reintroducing discrimination in the name of presumed sex differences.<sup>132</sup> Other observers, including the initiators of the public Girls Leadership School in New York and the newly opened school of the same name in Chicago, insist that girls are entitled to schools and classes in which women and girls come first—that because of the historical and continuing discrimination against them, there is a compensatory purpose to schools and courses for girls.<sup>133</sup> Some argue that separate schools for girls are tantamount to the separate is “inherently unequal”<sup>134</sup> finding in *Brown v. Board of Education*.<sup>135</sup> Others counter that the difference between enforced segregation and the choice of a single sex school is profound. Careful analysts agree that the law is not clear on the subject, at least in public education, and experiments with

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128. GIRLS INC., BECOMING STRONG, SMART & BOLD: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1 (1996).

129. GIRLS INC., MY GIRLFRIEND ZELDA<sup>SM</sup>: A PROGRAM FOR GIRLS AGES 6 TO 8 (2001).

130. 20 U.S.C. § 1681 (1994).

131. NAT'L FED'N OF STATE HIGH SCH. ASS'NS, 2000 HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS PARTICIPATION SURVEY (2001), at [http://www.nfhs.org/part\\_survey99-00.htm](http://www.nfhs.org/part_survey99-00.htm).

132. See Salome, *supra* note 54, at 253-257, 279.

133. *Id.* at 232, 248-49.

134. *Id.* at 257, 262-63.

135. *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 484, 495 (1954).

various types of schools and programs are underway across the nation.<sup>136</sup>

Girls Inc. affiliates offer programs for girls both in and out of school in many cities. Often the boys continue in their regular classes or another organization offers a program for boys in the same time period.<sup>137</sup> After school, the Girls Inc. programs often supplement other offerings so girls can choose whether to participate in the special programs, while boys and other girls continue with the regularly scheduled after school program. Often the after school choice is between the Girls Inc. offering and other extracurricular activities such as sports, band, or student newspapers. Many affiliates have noticed that when they offer Girls Inc. programs (even apparently neutral programs like Operation SMART) in coed settings, the gender equity is difficult to maintain—boys, many of whom are confident of their science skills, take over and leave girls watching or taking notes.<sup>138</sup> Although some Girls Inc. affiliates serve significant numbers of boys as they seek funds to provide youth programs and services, Girls Inc. recommends that national programs be implemented only for girls and young women.<sup>139</sup>

#### **XVI. BEYOND ZERO-SUM ANALYSES OF WHO BENEFITS/ WHO LOSES**

The recent consternation about the well-being of boys ranges from beneficial observations to those more counterproductive. It is true that more boys than girls are diagnosed with learning disabilities, that many boys are tense about macho expectations and that all boys lose from being male in an overly violent culture. It is time that gender-specific needs and the harmful effects of sex stereotyping were understood for boys and young men as well as for girls and young women. The assumption that gender equity is a zero-sum game such as tic-tac-toe or football, when if one person or team wins, the other must lose, is counterproductive. Rather, educators and others invested in the present and future well-being of young people need to work together to see that all young people fare well and resources and attention are increased. It is a fallacy

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136. See Salome *supra* note 54, at 265-75. Other treatments of the subject include articles by Morgan *supra* note 54, and an early investigation, Chai R. Feldblum, Nancy Friedman Krent & Virginia G. Watkin, *Legal Challenges to All-Female Organizations*, 21 HARV. C.R.-C.L. L. REV. 171, 177-78 (1986).

137. GIRLS INC., *supra* note 1, at 16-18.

138. MEAD, *supra* note 68, at 15; GIRLS INC., *supra* note 122, at 1 (1994).

139. GIRLS INC., *TAKING THE LEAD: GIRLS' RIGHTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY* 2 (2000).

to assert that decreasing attention and resources to girls will somehow increase or balance the resources for boys. With women constituting only fourteen percent of Congress,<sup>140</sup> with only four women CEOs in the Fortune 500,<sup>141</sup> and with women still excluded as players from the NFL, NBA, and National League Baseball, it is fair to conclude that gender inequity has not suddenly flipped to give females the overall advantage. Intentional and compensatory programs for girls are still very much warranted.<sup>142</sup>

### **XVII. HIGH EXPECTATIONS NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE**

If a girl is to grow up to run a highway construction firm, she needs high expectations all the way. She needs a bright yellow Tonka backhoe along with her dolls. She needs teachers who expect her to excel in math and to be able to teach the other kids the intricacies of three-dimensional computer graphing. She needs people who make sure she takes standardized tests, writes practice essays, and scouts for scholarships. She needs to play hard to win and learn how to lose with her basketball team. She needs to earn money mowing lawns and repairing the mower or working in traffic control for the city. She needs to know the women leaders of construction, banking, and engineering companies so they can encourage her to persevere.

Discouraging words sidetracks too many girls. The principles of high expectation apply no matter what career a girl has in mind. Every girl is entitled to serious attention from adults in her studies, hobbies, and vocational preparation.

### **XVIII. "EQUAL VOICES"—HIGH STANDARDS FOR COEDUCATION**

If gender equality in coeducational settings were easy, it would have been achieved in the first 150 years of coeducation. Nearly everything that takes place in schools reinforces the status quo of gender and other inequities.<sup>143</sup> Achieving fairness in coed schools

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140. *Women in the 106th Congress*, in *THE AMERICAN WOMAN 2001-2002* 343 (Cynthia B. Costello & Anne J. Stone eds., 2001).

141. Sheila Wellington & Katherine Giscombe, *Women and Leadership in Corporate America*, in *THE AMERICAN WOMAN 2001-2002* 87 (2001).

142. MEAD, *supra* note 68, at 13.

143. GIRLS INC., *TAKING THE LEAD: GIRLS' RIGHTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY* 2 (2000).

requires girls and boys to have “equal voices.”<sup>144</sup> Gender equity must be a topic of conversation, and both girls and boys must be alert to recognizing and moving beyond stereotypes, blithe assumptions, and typical patterns of behavior. Everyone benefits when male privilege is challenged—in the process the male stereotypes and gender expectations are also examined and dismantled.

**XIX. CULTURAL ENTITLEMENTS—SOME TIME IN THE HAVEN  
AND THE SCHOOL FOR SUCCESS**

A girl could get weary of the under-expectation, the assumptions of weakness and inferiority, the smirking about her strongly held goals. She could get tired of the choice between horror movies with girls as victims and glamour movies with insipid heroines. A girl could get tired. A former president of Girls Inc. once said as she rose, went down the hall, looked in the mirror and brushed her teeth she often thought of herself as herself, not consciously as Black or a woman. Girls, whether in school or after school, in youth organizations or faith-based organizations, are entitled to times and places where they come first, just as they are. Girls are entitled to some time with each other and adults who understand them. The model should be a mix of the comfortable haven and the edgy school for success, where girls are “inspired to be strong, smart and bold”<sup>145</sup> by the values they learn and the company they keep.

**XX. ALIKE AND DIFFERENT—SISTERHOOD AMONG GIRLS AND  
YOUNG WOMEN**

The stereotypes about girls are pervasive—there are the shopping stereotypes about all girls and the body jibes about fat girls, thin girls, Black girls, blonde girls, home girls, farm girls—no girl is immune. Girls Inc. is proud to take the pressure off girls to compete with one another and to promote the wonderful qualities girls share, as well as the ways they are different as individuals. Girls who learn to be critical of the stereotypes of gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability/disability also learn to appreciate one another for their virtues, their skills, personalities, and problems. In a supportive environment, girls tend to be sisters.

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144. Molly Mead, *Why Girls?*, 1 LEADING THE WAY 12, 10-14 (1998) (describing the “equal voices” programs as taking into account the fact that girls are often denied access to the privilege and opportunity that young men are afforded).

145. GIRLS INC., *supra* note 1, at 1.

**XXI. SISTERS ARE DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES—SUPPORTING  
GIRLS AS ADVOCATES FOR EQUITY**

Girls are very articulate about the ways the world, their communities, their schools and their families need to change in order for their lives to improve. If the girls are always doing the dishes and minding the younger kids, try mixing up the chores by gender so everyone learns important life skills. If sexual harassment is typical in the middle school, help girls organize to make mutual respect the school-wide creed. If scholarships are going to high school boys because the criteria are standardized tests with no attention to coursework and grades, help girls conduct the research to demonstrate the unfairness of the current system. When girls want a meeting with the sports editor to discuss the coverage of girls and women in sport, use your influence to make the meeting happen. Much inequity is accidental; once we recognize the vexing barriers to girls' achievement many more people will be willing to challenge the status quo. We say at Girls Inc. that girls are ready to confront and overcome those barriers. It is our job to help or get out of the way.